

**development concept plan
and assessment**

february 1983

**C & O CANAL
BRUNSWICK**



NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

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DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN
AND ASSESSMENT
FOR THE
BRUNSWICK, MARYLAND SECTION
OF
CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO CANAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
MARYLAND / DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

FEBRUARY 1983



Prepared by

National Capital Team
Denver Service Center
National Park Service



Date of photography July 23, 1981

BRUNSWICK, MARYLAND

Scale: 1" = 1,500 feet

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS PLANNING

This document describes a series of actions for the Brunswick area of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. This plan is in keeping with the unique role of this section of the canal as a unit of the National Park Service as expressed in the General Plan for the park.

The Brunswick area of the C&O Canal extends one mile from the Brunswick town park to Lock 30 (Sigafous Lock) between miles 54 and 55. Brunswick was an important Potomac crossing and here the Union Army of the Potomac returned to Virginia following the Battles of Antietam and Gettysburg. Railroad yards were built in 1890; the population grew rapidly and the name was changed from Berlin to Brunswick.

Railroad tracks and a roundhouse continue to dominate the scene. The 7½ miles of railroad yards at Brunswick form the longest railroad marshalling yards in the United States owned by a single railroad, the Chessie System (formerly Baltimore and Ohio Railroad).

A museum and hospitality center are located in the historic town, developed by the Brunswick Potomac Foundation, Inc. These facilities tell the story of the history of the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad, the C&O Canal, the Potomac River, and the historic town of Brunswick. In October of each year, the town celebrates its "Brunswick Railroad Days," with free craft demonstrations and tours of the museum and C&O Canal.

Pursuant to Public Law 91-664, which established the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park in January 1971, the National Park Service began a new management era for this 184-mile historical resource. With a boundary expanded from 5,257 to 20,781 acres, a mandate to provide for the enjoyment of the park's resources in such a manner as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations was established, and on the advice of a 19-member citizen's advisory committee, the National Park Service set out to prepare a plan for the park.

It was not the purpose of this plan to spell out specific development proposals for the park. Rather, it established an overall management philosophy for the park, which is being followed by more specific action plans (development concept plans).

The General Plan for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park called for the stabilization and partial restoration of the historic canal and its structures, the preservation of the atmosphere of history blended into a charming natural setting, the interpretation of the rich array of historical and natural values found along the canal, and provisions for as much outdoor recreation as will not intrude upon or impair the resources which the park was established to protect.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PARK

In order to recognize the potential of the park resources, the purposes of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park are to provide, in perpetuity, the opportunity for mankind

. . . to understand the canal's reason for being, its construction, its role in transportation, economic development and westward expansion, the way of life which evolved upon it, the history of the region through which it passes, and to gain an insight into the era of canal building in the country;

. . . to appreciate the setting in which it lies and the natural and human history that can be studied along its way; and

. . . to enjoy the recreational use of the canal, the parklands and the adjacent Potomac River.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The objectives for management of the park administered in the historical category of the National Park System are:

- . . . preserve the atmosphere of past times and enduring natural beauty and safeguard historic remains and natural features;
- . . . impart to visitors an understanding and appreciation of an historic way of life blended into the natural setting of the Potomac Valley; and
- . . . develop the potential of the park's recreation resources for safe yet stimulating enjoyment by the visitors within limits compatible with the other two management objectives.

The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal is not seen as serving the need for intensive, structural recreational playgrounds or other manmade facilities. Rather, the canal's role is to provide the recreational user with a natural hiking, biking, and camping experience.

THE GENERAL PLAN

In analyzing the park's role in the National Park System, as well as the Potomac River Valley, it becomes apparent that there is a wide variety of visitors to the park. The national visitor or tourist, the short-term recreationist, the long-term towpath user, as well as the users of the Potomac River, all place demands on the park.

The land use plan was proposed as the method to ensure that a variety of visitor experiences could be provided along this 184-mile park. This was proposed in the form of a zoning system. The zoning system has five zones which range from complete restoration, with high density use activity, to remote natural areas with very low visitor density use. The five zones recognize the value which various sections of the park contain. These five zones of the park are shown below.

ZONE A - NATIONAL INTERPRETIVE CENTER ZONE - This zone defines areas containing major historic restoration opportunities where the park visitor will be able to see a functioning canal in an historic setting. The areas were also selected for accessibility, availability of parklands for development of visitor facilities, and the compatibility of the surrounding environment outside the park. These interpretive centers are seen as supporting the largest density of visitor use. Most of that use is considered to be short-term (one to two hours). The concept of development of these areas is that of an outdoor living history museum. Historical accuracy is imperative in these re-creations of historic scenes.

ZONE B - CULTURAL INTERPRETIVE ZONE - This zone identifies sections of the park where historic resources occur, but the high density of Zone A is deemed to be incompatible with the desirable mood of the area. In most cases, the historic resources do not provide the accessibility, the available land, or the attractive qualities of those in Zone A. The historic resources are often spread along the canal, producing a longer-term visitor use than found in Zone A. This is estimated at two to four hours.

These areas will not necessarily be completely restored, as the objective here is to introduce the visitor to towpath use with a lesser degree of historic interpretation. Rewatering of portions of these sections is proposed. The extent of rewetting will be the subject of future engineering feasibility studies.

ZONE C - SHORT-TERM RECREATION ZONE - These sections are designated to serve the general towpath user who is desirous of achieving a leisurely stroll of two to six hours in a natural setting. These areas are limited in historic resources and available land for visitor facilities. The sections are short and are often links between two zones of higher density, where cross traffic is considered to be a desirable activity. The objective here is to ensure a leisurely recreational experience in a natural setting where uncontrolled access or development could produce a higher user density.

ZONE D - SHORT-TERM REMOTE ZONE - Due to limited access, these sections can retain a remoteness, which produces a low density use. Through proper management, the park visitor can be assured of finding solitude in a natural setting. The objective here is to provide short-term experiences for those who wish to spend an undisturbed day in a natural setting.

ZONE E - LONG-TERM REMOTE ZONE - These sections provide the user with the opportunity for a long-term primitive hiking, biking or horseback experience. With limited access, high quality natural surroundings, and little development, these sections are seen as providing for those who seek a near wilderness involvement with the environment. The objective here is to ensure that these sections retain their wild character and continue to provide this type of experience.

Parking for towpath users will not be provided in Zone E as adjacent sections will be designed to provide access. If it is deemed appropriate, parking for river users will be provided at carefully selected locations in Zone E Sections.

The Brunswick area has been designated Zone B in the General Plan. Therefore this Development Concept Plan, which follows, is based on the provisions of the Cultural Interpretive Zone.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN FOR BRUNSWICK-TOWN PARK TO LOCK 30:

THE RESOURCES

This section includes Lock 30, which is one of four that were doubled in length by wooden extensions. The ruins of an old mill lie adjacent to the lock.

ACCESS AND EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

Access is gained from the town of Brunswick by crossing the railroad yards. Existing use of the towpath by motor vehicles should be eliminated. The Brunswick Town Park provides camping and boat launching.

PARKLANDS AND ADJACENT LAND USE

The 90-acre park owned by the town of Brunswick will be further developed for camping and picnicking. A road to serve the park and the sewage treatment plant can be constructed between the towpath and the river. As the canal, towpath, and Lock 30 will be restored and rewatered, care must be taken to select a vehicular crossing of the canal which will not intrude on the historic scene. Parking for towpath users can be provided adjacent to the former mill on the berm side of the canal. All remaining parklands here lie within the annual floodplain. Consequently, no other development is proposed. The town of Brunswick, the railroad yards, the roundhouse and other historic structures could become a fine working exhibit. The town has good access by rail and road and can provide services for visitors as well.

The people of Brunswick are enthusiastic about the tourism potential of the town, the canal, and the railroad yard. The Potomac Foundation has developed a railroad and canal museum. The town has held the "Potomac River Festival" for the past seven years. This yearly August event, attended by an average of 6,000 visitors, is a festival featuring arts and crafts, historical displays, and tours of the railroad facilities.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

GOAL: To maintain the historic integrity of the C&O Canal and provide safer access to, and circulation within, the park for both vehicles and pedestrians.

ISSUES: The canal, towpath, and Lock 30 are presently heavily impacted by current use and the extensive development surrounding them. The canal is presently dry. Vehicles and pedestrians all presently use the canal towpath for the conflicting activities of hiking, jogging, biking and driving to the campground, sewage treatment plant and pumping station. Users of the state-owned boat ramp must drive across parkland and over the canal to reach the launching area.

PHASE I:

<u>Actions</u>	<u>Consequences</u>
o Lock 30 will be stabilized and the lock gates restored.	Improvement of the appearance of the lock and its interpretive potential. Preservation of its historic fabric.
o Visitors to the park will be encouraged to leave their vehicles in the public commuter parking lot near the railroad station.	Elimination of unnecessary vehicular traffic will improve the historic scene, lessen environmental impacts and provide a safer environment for visitors.
o Traffic to the sewage treatment plant, pump station, and campground will reach the towpath by traveling across the canal on an extension of Maple Avenue. Visitors will be prevented from proceeding west on the towpath by a gate or other physical barrier.	Elimination of the impact of vehicles on that section of the towpath between Maple Avenue and the Lock. Avoidance of the presently existing conflict between pedestrians, bikers and cars. Provision of a safer towpath for hikers and bikers, which can be restored to its historic grade. Improvement of the historic scene. Decreased towpath maintenance costs.
o Traffic to the state boat ramp, near Lock 30, will be prevented from driving on the towpath by physical barriers placed on each side of the boat-ramp road, where it crosses the canal, provided an alternate access can be agreed upon by the National Park Service, the public, and town officials.	Elimination of the impact of vehicles on the lock, the main cultural resource of the Brunswick Canal area, and on that section of the towpath adjacent to the lock. Freeing of these areas for interpretation. Improvement of

the historic scene by permitting restoration of both lock and towpath to their historic appearance.

RATIONALE: Except for the boat-ramp road crossing, these actions will prevent further deterioration of the lock resulting from vehicular use, by eliminating traffic from that section of the towpath extending west of Maple Avenue. This section of the towpath will be restored to hiker/biker use and the unsafe conditions created by simultaneous use of the path by vehicles and pedestrians will be eliminated.

Phase II:

<u>Actions</u>	<u>Consequences</u>
o A new road will be constructed, which will cross the canal at Maple Avenue, parallel the canal on the Potomac River side, and extend to the sewage treatment plant, pumping station, and campgrounds.	Elimination of the impact of vehicles on that section of towpath between Maple Avenue and the city campground. Avoidance of the presently existing conflict between hikers and cars. Provision of a safer towpath for hikers and bikers, which can be restored to its historic grade. Decreased towpath maintenance costs. Environmental disruption of that section of the park between the towpath and the river required for construction of the new road. Easier and safer vehicular access to the sewage treatment plant, power station, and city campground.
o The towpath will be restored to its historic grade.	Enhancement of the historic scene. Safer and more convenient environment for towpath users. Reduced maintenance costs.
o A landscape plan will be developed, which will screen the canal from the railroad tracks. Through judicious clearing of underbrush, views of the Potomac from the towpath will be provided.	Improved historic integrity in a more park-like setting.
o If engineering studies support its feasibility, the canal at Brunswick will be rewatered. The extent of rewatering will depend on the results of the study.	Expanded interpretive potential. Possible initial increase in maintenance and staffing needs. Extensive environmental impacts.

RATIONALE: These actions will enhance all of the positive results of Phase I, by eliminating vehicular traffic from the towpath entirely, as proposed in the General Plan. The proposed road will provide a safer and better designed and maintained access to the facilities located along it. Rewatering of the canal at Brunswick is proposed in the General Plan and will greatly improve the interpretive and recreational potential of the canal. The landscape plan will result in a more esthetic experience for all users of the towpath, canal, and new road.

GOAL: To interpret the history of the C&O Canal and B&O Railroad interactions.

ISSUES: No park interpretive facilities or visitor contact points presently exist in or near the park.

PHASE I:

Actions

- o The Brunswick Railroad Museum will be used as the main visitor contact point and the location for developing the theme of canal/railroad interactions. An interpretive exhibit will be located here, which will relate to the annual Brunswick Railroad Days.
- o A wayside exhibit will be located between Lock 30 and the old mill ruins, which will interpret the role of Brunswick in the history of the C&O Canal and the development of the Potomac River shore.
- o Brochures and minifolders describing the C&O Canal NHP would be made available at the railroad museum and campground.

RATIONALE: These actions will fulfill the objectives of the Interpretive Prospectus for the Brunswick area of the C&O Canal NHP by providing interpretation of the important theme of canal/railroad conflicts. In addition, park visitors will have an orientation facility at the Brunswick Railroad Museum, which interfaces with the historic town.

Consequences

Provides an orientation facility and program for visitors, which does not presently exist, and for which there is not appropriate space within the park. Involves the community in park activities.

Makes available an interpretive exhibit, which emphasizes Brunswick's role in C&O Canal, where none presently exists.

Disseminates information on the entire canal in an area where such information is presently unavailable.

fulfill the objectives of the Interpretive Prospectus for the Brunswick area of the C&O Canal NHP by providing interpretation of the important theme of canal/railroad conflicts. In addition, park visitors will have an orientation facility at the Brunswick Railroad Museum, which interfaces with the historic town.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS CONSIDERED: In the course of formulating the preferred alternative, certain actions suggested by the planning committee and described in the General Plan or in the Interpretive Prospectus for the Brunswick section of the C&O Canal NHP were not incorporated into the Preferred Alternative. These actions and the reasons for their omission are described below:

<u>Action Considered</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
o Constructing a new road along the berm side of the towpath.	Rejected because of the extensive impact of such a road on the historic and natural environment.
o Restoration of the lockkeeper's house.	Deemed not to be cost-effective.
o Locating a visitor contact facility in the railroad station or elsewhere in the park.	This would create conflict between visitors and rail passengers. No suitable structure for visitor orientation presently exists in the park. The town of Brunswick has a railroad museum, which is well-suited to visitor use.
o Relocation of the campground.	No suitable site exists near the park.
o Construction of a new campground elsewhere.	No funds are available for such an undertaking.
o Parking in the park.	The linear nature of the park and its minimal acreage preclude providing a lot of sufficient size to provide adequate parking for visitors. The park is bordered by extensive public parking areas, which are large enough to accommodate weekday visitors and are largely deserted on weekends, when park visitation occurs.
o Restoration of wooden lock extension.	This structure was not an original part of the lock. It would be a costly project requiring high maintenance expenditures.
o Construction of a new road elsewhere.	Although such a road would prevent the user conflicts between hiking, biking, and vehicular use which now occur on the towpath, it would also heavily impact on the historic and environmental resource.

o No Action.

Provides no solution to existing park problems.

COMPLIANCE

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT: Since the majority of the Brunswick area lies within the annual floodplain, existing structures will be adequately flood-proofed and no new development, apart from roads, is proposed. All proposed actions are, therefore, in compliance with existing federal, state, county, and local floodplain requirements.

HISTORIC RESTORATION: Any stabilization or restoration of historic structures will be carried out according to the standards of the secretary of the interior for historic preservation projects. The state historic preservation officer and the advisory council on historic preservation were asked to comment on the General Plan, which contains actions proposed in this preferred alternative and no objections were interposed.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT: Before any development of the Brunswick area is undertaken, the Fish and Wildlife Service will be contacted. This will assure that no threatened or endangered species, or critical habitat of such species, will be harmed by the actions proposed under this alternative.

COORDINATION/CONSULTATION:

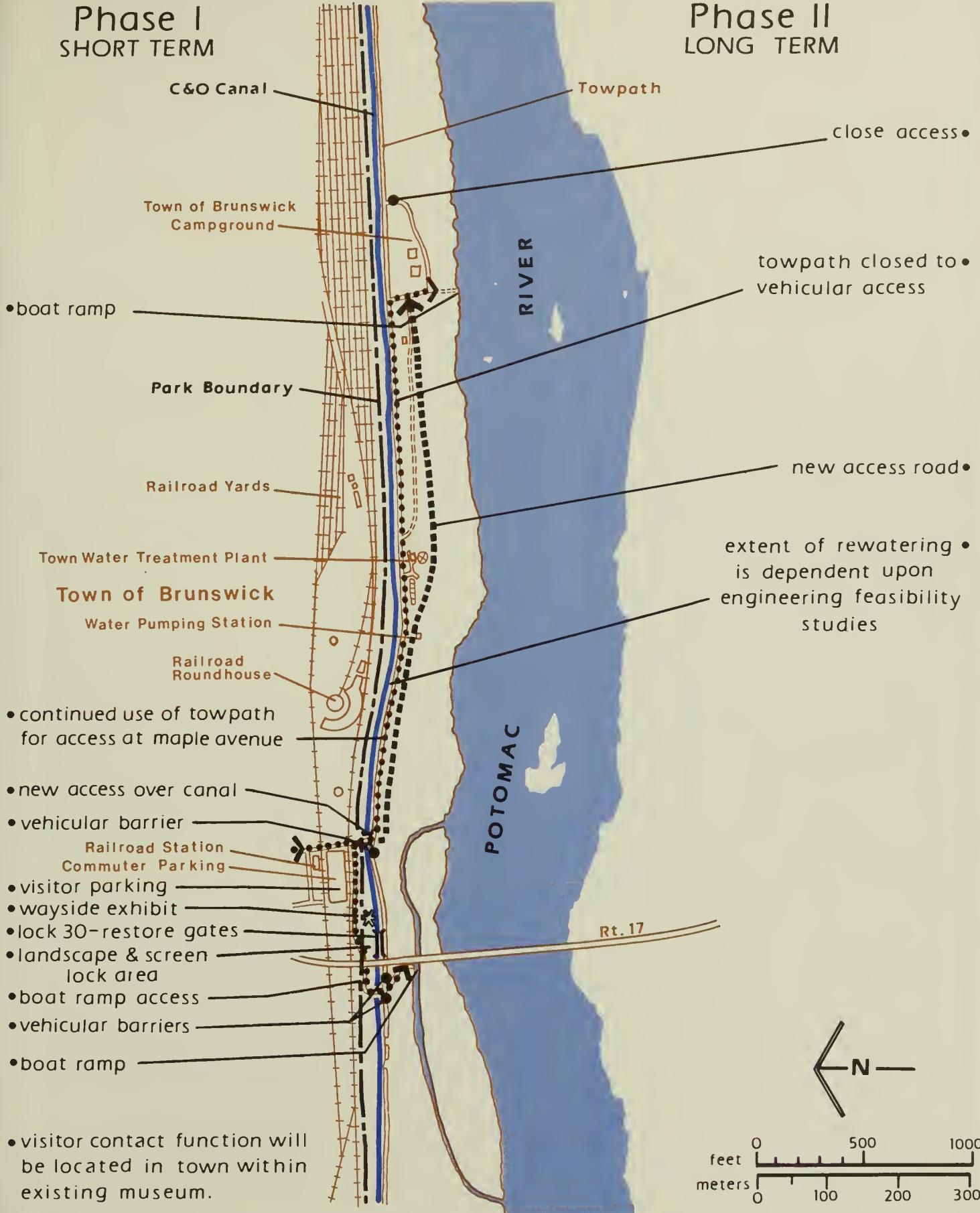
Planning team meetings were held on June 11, June 28, and October 21, 1981.

Valuable assistance was received from Mr. Jess Orndorff, Mayor of Brunswick, as well as members of the Brunswick Town Council. The Mayor's C&O Canal Committee met on September 3 and October 21, 1981.

The alternative was presented to the C&O Canal Advisory Commission in December of 1981 and to the new Advisory Commission on September 18, 1982. The new commission favored this alternative.

**Phase I
SHORT TERM**

**Phase II
LONG TERM**



DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN * BRUNSWICK, MD.

Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park

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NOTES

NOTES

As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, parks and recreation areas, and to ensure the wise use of all these resources. The department also has major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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